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DESCENDANTS OF
PATIENCE DUDLEY DENISON

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THE DESCENDANTS OF PATIENCE DUDLEY DENISON.*

The Puritan on the New England shore has always been a conspicuous figure in history. He stands clearly forth not only as the exponent of a new idea in government and religion, but as a man powerful in all things. His whole bearing is one of lordly mien and command. The soil he treads upon, he treads like a King; the dusky aborigines he crushes out with the relentlessness of a fierce conqueror; the low and unruly elements, always incident to an unsettled society, he condemns and eradicates with the air of a tyrant. He builds his homes, apparently unmoved, in an atmosphere of imminent danger; he tills the field with a frown upon the harsh and foreboding aspects of Nature; he pushes his way here and there with a mind filled with the sublime consciousness of success. A spirit of dogged determination forces him irresistibly on. A picturesque figure is he, and certainly one very unique.

When we portray the Puritan our imagination always pictures the *man*. It was the *man* who did the fighting, the parleying, the punishing, the governing, the building up and the tearing down. It is only now and then that we catch even a glimpse of a *woman*; but the times were stern and hard and those which tried *women's* souls. The idea of the man in the Puritan world has been kept alive by orators, statesmen, and writers during all the generations since. The idea of the woman has only now and then been brought to notice by the poet's pen or the brush of the artist. But there were women and all honor to them. The Puritan exodus would have been signally lacking in success and would have resulted in absolute failure had it not been for her presence. The women were just as truly founding a state when they were rocking the cradle and spinning the silvery flax, as were the men when on the war-trail or in the assembly-house. Aye, more:—

* This paper was read by Allison Hale Brainerd of Gardner, Mass., High School at the Gov. Thomas Dudley Family Association Banquet at Hotel Vendue, Boston, Dec. 25th, 1924, for which it was indebted to the generosity of Senator Geo. Peabody Wetmore of Rhode Island.



their gentleness and presence softened the severe things of life, and more rapidly made the hearthstone the foundation upon which a new civilization and government could be built.

" Blessing she is; God made her so,
And deeds of week-day holiness
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
Nor hath she ever chanced to know,
That aught were easier than to bless."

In Ipswich town lying along a quiet street, and topping a neighboring hill is a cemetery. The Puritan, though stern, had an eye for beauty withal, for, from the crest of the slope a picture of varied enchantment is presented to the gaze. At one's feet is a vale of peace and quiet, threaded by a lazy river, and holding in its arms a dreamy town. Farther away is the blue expanse of ocean, except where the foamy waves run races with each other on the shelving sands. Still farther away beyond the emerald marshes rise the bold outlines of Agamenticus; in another direction, the coastal foothills and those bordering the Merrimac valley. Over all rests the calm and quiet of the country.

No wonder the early settlers found this an attractive as well as an accessible place for abode, and no wonder they marked out on the tree-clad slopes a plot of ground which should be their final home. Here repose the dust of many worthies; here also are some of the finest remains of monumental architecture and tracery, and some of the choicest inscriptions extant. These again testify to an æsthetic element in the Puritan mind.

At the present time only one of these remains needs claim our attention. It is a simple tomb, rectangular in shape, built of brick two feet above the ground, and covered by a heavy red slab. There is no inscription anywhere to be found; there is not even the faint outline of tracery work; no marks at all, except those left by the elements. Twenty-five years ago the sculptured ornamental corner of the stone covering could be made out, and aged persons then living could remember the inscription which was legible sixty years before. It was a simple announcement that this was the tomb of Major-General Daniel Denison, with the date of his death and his age. There used to be

also a Coat-of-Arms, but that was long since carried away to an unknown place, at an unremembered time.

There is, of course, no doubt of the identity of this burial place, and that it is the grave of the distinguished General. The General's wife was Patience Dudley but we have no record of where she lies beyond the fact that she was buried in the Old North Cemetery, Ipswich. It is to be supposed that she sleeps in the same tomb with her husband, but this is a matter of pure conjecture. So far as records go, the vault has never been opened and it is not absolutely known whose mortal parts here repose. But let us think for sentiment's sake, if for no other reason, that this is the eternal abode of the earthly remains of Patience Dudley. And as we stand by her grave on a summer's day we can pay tribute to a typical Puritan woman.

In making a study of progeny it is the logical course to trace back to the parent stock, not only for the lines of descent but to find out what sort of stuff there was in that stock and hence what blood courses through the veins of the off-shoots.

But little is known of the remarkable nature of Patience Dudley herself. If we compare her with her mother, she appears to advantage, for owing to the careless keeping of English records it is a matter of some conjecture who the mother really was. If we compare Patience with her sister, the somewhat brilliant Anne Bradstreet, her personal endowments and intellectual qualities suffer. What we do know about her is, that she was the second daughter and third child born to Governor Thomas Dudley and his wife Dorothy, sometime and somewhere in England. We also know that Governor Thomas brought her to this country along with the rest of his family when she was a young lady, and that she married Daniel Denison at Cambridge in 1632. It was only a short time after this that circumstances led Governor Dudley, his son Rev. Samuel, Simon Bradstreet, and others to establish new homes in Ipswich. It is probable that Daniel Denison and his young bride either went with them or followed almost immediately. At all events, they seem to have been well established there with a house and land in 1635,

and from that time on, the names of both were closely connected with the town.

Patience was a woman of character and well skilled in the arts of every day life. She was a woman of affairs, for she had been a close intimate with her father and had the training which would result from being in a family where matters of state and higher things of life were discussed. This environment made her a person fitted to cope with the hardships of that early time as well as one to preside over a dignified home. Besides, she had the reliant and fighting blood of the Dudleys in her veins, and the advantage of the constant advice and example of her father. Of her husband Daniel Denison, we are well informed, for he was a man of much prominence in the affairs of the colony, and the records are filled with reference to him. He was of good Norman stock and came over to this country with Eliot in 1631 and settled at Roxbury. The next year when he married Patience he was living in Cambridge and was on the list of the first settlers and was a church member. When he removed to Ipswich he at once became a full fledged citizen. He was nine times a deputy; he was a member of the court which tried Anne Hutchinson. He was town clerk for a series of years; a captain; an assistant; a member of the trade committee; a promoter of the Salisbury Colony. He was four times the Speaker of the General Court. He became a Sergeant-Major, and then by vote of the General Court, Major-General. With the military duties of training soldiers and erecting fortifications against the Indians came the not less important political questions involved in the attitude of Massachusetts towards her neighbors, and the French in Canada and Acadia. At a later time when the Dutch took New York in 1673 and there was great alarm lest raids should be made on the New England settlements, Denison was put in command, and secured the Bay Colony coast from successful attack. He was a consummate commander, an energetic worker, a man of his word and wise withal. His thoughts and efforts were for the general good, as his paper or book, the "Irenicon" will attest. That the people recognized the generous traits of his character is shown by the great con-

fidence they had in his sagacity, the many honors they conferred upon him, and the rewards they gave him in the form of grants of land.

Daniel Denison and Patience Dudley were two people well fitted by natural endowments and with worldly wisdom to rear a family and found a line of descent. And while the number of immediate descendants is not large, it contains much of eminence and quality, and is a line through which any one should be proud to trace his lineage back to Governor Thomas Dudley. As we come down to the present time we find many well known and honorable families connected by direct ancestry through Patience, with the second Governor of Massachusetts Bay; and all along the way are individuals more or less prominent.

Daniel and Patience Denison had four children, only two of whom, John and Elizabeth, grew to maturity — a family in striking contrast, certainly, to the fashion of the day. Both these children married well. John united himself with Martha Symonds, daughter of the Deputy-Governor, and Elizabeth married Rev. John Rogers, President of Harvard College. John Denison died when he was only thirty-one and left but two children. This is in accordance with the "Memoirs" of Simon Bradstreet but Major-General Denison in his autobiography says there was another child. Nothing is known of this child, however, and no lines of descent can be traced to it. Of the two children of record, one was Rev. John, the sixth minister of Ipswich. He was a graduate of Harvard College and married into the very respectable Saltonstall family of Haverhill. He died in 1680 when he was only twenty-four and left but one son, Col. John, who went to Harvard, graduated, and married the daughter of John Leverett, at that time President of the College, who, by the way, had married Margaret Denison Rogers, the grand-daughter of Patience. Col. John studied for the ministry, but failing health compelled him to change his plans and he became a lawyer at Ipswich. He was for a time also Librarian of Harvard College. He had two children, Col. John Jr., and a daughter Mary. He died young.

Returning to Elizabeth, the other child of Patience and Major-General Denison, we find that she married in 1666, at the age of eighteen, Rev. Dr. John Rogers, President of Harvard College, and a son of Rev. Nathaniel Rogers of Ipswich. They had six children:—Elizabeth, who married Hon. John Appleton; Margaret, who married Rev. John Leverett, already mentioned; Rev. John; Dr. Daniel; Rev. Nathaniel; and Patience. Rev. John Rogers married for a second wife Martha Whittingham, who was a great-grand-daughter of John Calvin the reformer. They had ten children. Dr. Daniel Rogers married Sarah Appleton and the union resulted in nine children. Rev. Nathaniel Rogers married Sarah Purkiss and they had eight children. Another Nathaniel Rogers of the fourth generation had six children. The great majority of this numerous off-spring lived to maturity and in turn reared families. A remarkable exception is the case of Margaret and Pres. Leverett. They had nine children. Six died in infancy, one at eleven, one at twenty-seven, and one lived to be thirty-five and died leaving a family of nine.

It will be seen in comparing the descendants of John and Elizabeth, children of Patience, down to the fifth generation, that the Denison name practically runs out. The families were very small, the members of them in ill health and short lived. On the other hand, the descendants of Elizabeth were robust, and generally lived to middle or advanced age. The families were abnormally large and owing to a good proportion of daughters, the blood of Patience through her off-spring Elizabeth rapidly disseminated by intermarriage into families of many different names. The Rogers and the Appleton come in for a prominent position. Then there are the Cutts, Holyoke, Gilman, Howard, Jarvis, Leonard, Loring, Kingsbury, Spaulhawk, Sprague, Brimmer, Inches, Sigourney, Thyng, Waldo, Watson, Wise, and others.

There are two characteristics which distinguish the early families; one is the stand they took for education; the other is their religious tendency. Almost all the boys went to Harvard and nearly all put their training to account in some profession. There were many preachers and some of note. In the Rogers'

family alone, in two generations there were six ministers. When one remembers how much an education made a man powerful in the old days, and how much weight the clergy carried with it simply because it was the clergy, it is easy to understand that the immediate descendants of Patience Denison filled a prominent place in their towns and in the state.

In the Appleton family the ministerial leaning was especially strong. There was Margaret, fourth generation, who married in 1725 Rev. Edward Holyoke of Marblehead, President of Harvard College. Her brother Nathaniel was a minister born and ordained at Ipswich and he married the daughter of Rev. Henry Gibbs, a quite noted divine of Watertown. John Appleton of another generation, a Harvard graduate, also married the daughter of a clergyman, the Rev. John Sparhawk of Salem. In the Rogers' family the ministerial tendency was still stronger. Tradition has it that this family was descended from Rev. John Rogers the martyr, bound and burned at the stake at Smithfield in 1555. But this, like many other traditions, has no foundation in fact. The Rev. John Rogers of Dedham, England, from whom the family we are speaking of descended, was the son of a poor but respectable shoemaker of Chelmsford. But it was good religious stock, as well as professional. Beside the President of Harvard and the six ministers before mentioned there were lawyers, doctors, merchants, and military men, all of standing and honor. One was a noted physician. He was Dr. Daniel Rogers who was born in 1667, and who died from exposure on Hampton Beach in a great storm on Dec. 1, 1722. He left five children. The son became a minister, and three daughters each married ministers. Another Rogers of a later date was interested in politics and figured in the stirring times in Boston in Bunker Hill days. This was Jeremiah, a Littleton lawyer who in 1774 removed to Boston. He was appointed commissary to the Royal troops and sailed away from Massachusetts when Howe made his adieu. He died in Halifax. He was a bright, keen fellow, but evidently his political affiliations were not of the nature to be appreciated to the fullest extent at that particular time.

The descendants of Patience Denison boast of at least one

centenarian. This was Dr. Edward Augustus Holyoke, who was born Aug. 1, 1728 and died March 31, 1829. He was the son of Rev. Edward Holyoke, President of Harvard, and Margaret Appleton Holyoke, and belonged to the fifth generation from Patience. He had an "H. C." (Harvard College) attached to his name; he married into a good Boston family and was an eminent physician. His home and practice were for many years in Salem, and his descendants have always lived there and in adjoining towns, there being a goodly number at the present time in the town of Danvers.

As one studies the Patience Dudley Denison line he is impressed with the frequency with which he meets "H. C." connected with the names of the men. There is an exception to this and the only one I have found of like nature, in the case of William McKinstry, who was a graduate of Oxford. This William McKinstry seems to have been decidedly English in his tastes, not because he preferred Oxford to Harvard, but because he was apparently a voluntary exile from his native land. He was born at Taunton, Mass., in 1762 and after graduating from the University at Oxford he remained in the vicinity and became Rector of East Gunstead and Lingfield. For how many years he continued here I do not know, but he died unmarried in this country at Concord, N. H., in 1823. As we come down to the present time there are several who claim notice in the Denison lineage. One of these is Cecil Hampden Howard, ninth generation, who was born at Brattleboro, in 1862, and now lives in Beeve, Kansas. He is a gentleman of wide reading and scholastic attainments, and was for a series of years the most efficient Assistant Librarian of the celebrated Astor Library, New York. He is a member of the American Historical Association, of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, of the Long Island Historical Society. He is also an author, "Brattleboro in Verse and Prose," and "Life and Public Services of General John Walcott Phelps" being his most important works. For some time past he has been a successful editor.

Another name should be noted, and that is Dr. Daniel Denison Slade in the eighth generation. Prof. Slade was at the head of the Department of Zoology in Harvard for eleven years and Assistant and lecturer for another eleven years in Agassiz Museum. He was an eminent scholar, and a man who did much for his department thirty years ago. His descent was through the Rogers family direct from Patience Denison, through her daughter Elizabeth Rogers, her son Rev. John, his son Rev. Daniel, his son Daniel Denison, his daughter Elizabeth, who married J. T. Slade, a Boston merchant. Prof. Slade had in his possession a comparatively large number of relics both of the Rogers' and the Denison families. This collection included a copy of the book written by Major-General Denison, the "Irenicon," and also his "Autobiography." Dr. Slade died in 1896, and the interesting heirlooms are held and highly prized by his children at the present time.

There is one distinguished man descended from the Patience Dudley stock who is living not far away at the present time, Senator George Peabody Wetmore of Rhode Island. He is the eighth generation from Patience through her daughter Elizabeth Denison Rogers, her son Rev. John Rogers, his son Nathaniel Rogers, his son Nathaniel Rogers, his son John Whittingham Rogers, his daughter Anstiss Derby Rogers, Anstiss married William S. Wetmore of New York and three children were born to them, one of whom is Senator Wetmore. The two others are not living.

In this Dudley line of descent Mr. Wetmore's immediate ancestors were of sterling worth. Rev. Nathaniel Rogers was an Ipswich minister, who married the widow of Col. John Denison, Mary, the daughter of President Leverett. Their son Nathaniel was a Harvard man, and he married Abigail Dodge, daughter of Col. Abraham Dodge of Revolutionary times. Their son John Whittingham Rogers, who was born at Ipswich, but afterwards lived in Jamaica Plain, married Anstiss Pickman. She came from particularly good stock. She was the daughter of Col. Benjamin Pickman of Salem who was a military and business man, and served several terms in Congress. Her

mother was the daughter of the Honorable Elias H. Derby who was widely and favorably known. He lived in Salem and was one of the famous East India merchants when the town was engaged in its extensive foreign trade. John Whittingham Rogers and Anstiss D. Pickman had six children, one of whom was Anstiss, the mother of Mr. Wetmore.

George Peabody Wetmore was born in 1846 (Aug. 2) at London, during a sojourn of his parents abroad. Although born on English soil he is far from being an Englishman, and his life has been closely identified with all that is American. Unlike the great majority of the Patience Denison descendants in being connected with Harvard, he has been connected with Yale. He was graduated from there in 1867 with the A. B. degree and on account of his successful study and life, he received the A. M. degree in '71. At the end of his college course he entered at once on the study of law at the Columbia College Law School, from which institution he was graduated in 1869 with the degree of L. L. B. In the same year he was admitted to practice at the bar in both New York and Rhode Island. He has continued his associations with Yale in various ways. He is a trustee of the Peabody Museum. He is a trustee of the Peabody Educational Fund. He was nominated a Fellow of the University in 1888 but did not accept the honor. He is a staunch supporter of Yale and has the Yale spirit to a commendable degree.

In a political way Senator Wetmore has been prominent. In 1880 and again in 1884 he was a Presidential Elector. When the representatives of France visited Rhode Island in 1881 he was a member of the State Commission to receive them and do the honors of the occasion. He has been a very active member of the State House Erection Committee, which has so recently completed the fine Capitol building at Providence. Mr. Wetmore was Governor of Rhode Island in 1885-6, and in 1886-7, and served the state with much credit as its executive officer. In 1894 he was unanimously elected to the United States Senate and he is at the present time occupying that honorable position in his second term.

Senator Wetmore has not always been successful in his

political aspirations. He was defeated for a third term for Governor in 1887, although he received a much greater number of votes than he had at either of his two previous successful elections. He was defeated on the eighth ballot for United States Senator in 1889. But these setbacks did not act as discouragements but rather as incentives to renewed and better efforts, and in the end he came off victorious. Mr. Wetmore is in the prime of life and is engaged in many of its busy cares, as well as in the enjoyment of some of its pleasures. He spends his summers mostly at Newport on his estate. He also spends some time in New York. When Congress is in session he is in Washington. Besides these places of residence, his ample wealth enables him to devote some time to recreation and travel. It would seem that he leads quite an ideal life, though it is a busy one.

No one lives in vain who leaves behind an upright posterity and transmits to it the memory of an unblemished character. Patience Dudley did both of these things. Her name is not a household word it is true, as is that of her sister, at least with those acquainted with literature; nor is she in any way prominent as her brother Rev. Samuel, or his half brother Governor Joseph. On the other hand, she was a good daughter, a true helpmate, a loving mother, and a person possessing strength and honesty of purpose which her descendants have seemed always to emulate.

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